

# Asian Odyssey

A National K-12 Interdisciplinary Curriculum Model

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## Chado: The Japanese Tea Ceremony

**Grade Level:** This lesson can be adapted for grades 5-12.

### Purpose

To consider the art and the tradition of the tea ceremony and study the serving pieces used in the ceremony by participating in a tea ceremony.

### Concepts:

- *Chado* or *sado*—the way of tea; the tea ceremony
- *Chadogu* —tea utensils
- *Chanoyu* —the tea ceremony
- *Chaire* —small ceramic container (tea caddy) that holds the *matcha*
- *Chakin* —tea cloth (bleached white linen used to dry tea bowl)
- *Chasen* —a tea whisk made of bamboo or metal for mixing tea and water
- *Chashaku* —slender bamboo tea scoop
- *Chashitsu* —tea house or tea room
- *Chawan* —tea bowl
- *Futaoki* —rests made of ceramic or bamboo for the kettle lid
- *Hishaku*—a long-handled bamboo water ladle
- *Ikebana* —flower arrangement
- *Kakemono*—hanging scroll
- *Kensui* —bowl for waste water
- *Matcha* —powdered green tea
- *Mizusashi* —cold water container
- *Okama* —pot for boiling water
- *Shifuku* —small silk-like pouch or sack that holds the *chaire*
- *Tokonoma* —alcove where the scroll hangs or flowers are placed
- *Ocha* —green tea
- Kamakura period (1185-1333)—characterized by the heavy Chinese influence (e.g. Zen Buddhism, Confucian legal code) and the rise of the shoguns and the fall of Imperial power

### Key Ideas

- Tea and tea cultivation were brought to Japan from China in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century by Buddhist monks, who had learned to drink tea in order to keep themselves awake during the long hours of meditation.
- The first published book of tea, called *Kissa Yojoki* or the *Medicinal Benefits of Tea Drinking*, was written by Yesai or Eisai, who had studied Zen Buddhism in China.
- Tea was made popular during the Kamakura period when monks returned from China bringing with them the knowledge of tea and how it helped monks stay alert during meditation.
- During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Zen priests living in Daitoku-ji temple in Kyoto developed a ritual around serving tea.
- But the form, rules, and procedures of the tea ceremony were formally established by Sen no Rikyo in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. His descendants continue to run the most important tea schools and tea houses in Japan. In practice, no one can be a *true* tea ceremony host without years of intensive study.
- Tea master Sen no Rikyu expresses four basic ideas of the tea ceremony using four Chinese characters:
  - *Wa*, or harmony: achieved in a tea gathering because people communicate with each other, appreciate the utensils the host uses, and delight in the surroundings. Harmony can be achieved with tea bowls, flowers, scrolls, and people.
  - *Kei*, or respect: People must not discriminate; guests had to crawl through the three-fold teahouse door in tea rooms designed by Rikyu. The lowering of one's head regardless of one's status teaches equality.
  - *Sei*, or purity: The act of washing one's hands symbolizes the cleansing of the spirit or mind in order to prepare for the sensory experience of the tea ceremony.
  - *Jaku*, or calmness: It is believed that after achieving the first three principles, a serenity of the mind and spirit will take over.
- The tea ceremony is a revered Japanese social ritual. Host and guests share a sense of togetherness and oneness away from the stresses of daily life.
- The stylization and formality surrounding the ritual are compatible with the importance of manners and etiquette to the Japanese.
- The tea ceremony is concerned with tea, and food, but it is also concerned with the setting in which the ceremony takes place—the room, the plates, and the utensils—and with the manners and conversation of the participants. The eyes and nose must be charmed. For at the tea ceremony, one is not merely eating and drinking, but one is participating in a complete sensory experience.
- The tea ceremony celebrates the arts of architecture, ceramics, painting, and gardens.
- Developed under the influence of Zen Buddhism, the purpose of the ceremony is to purify the mind and spirit by experiencing oneness with nature. It has been described as an exercise in calmness, grace, and simplicity. The ceremony is designed to experience an all-encompassing moment of togetherness (however fleeting it may be).

- The essence of the tea ceremony is harmony—harmony between host and guests, between the meal and the season in which the food is being served, between the food and the containers and utensils, between the flavors and textures of the different foods, and between the inside décor and the outside garden surrounding it.
- Elegant serving pieces included a ladle, or *chashaku*, and a pottery bowl called *chawan* were developed.
- Within a short period, the tea ceremony had been taken over by the great warlords who turned it into a luxurious pastime. The aristocracy vied to outdo each other in the lavishness of their presentations.
- The tea ceremony was later taken up by the merchant classes who attempted to restore its simplicity and austerity.
- Invited guests enter the tearoom and focus on a hanging scroll that is intended to reflect a season or a mood suggested by the host.
- The host serves a light meal accompanied by a serving of *sake* and finally, a piece of fruit or light dessert.
- Guests leave the tearoom while the host begins by heating water then rinsing and wiping the bowls and serving pieces.
- Ocha, or loose green tea, is placed in a bowl and whipped with water until it becomes frothy. It is then served individually to the guests.
- Bowl depth varies by season. Deeper bowls are used in winter months to retain heat. Shallow bowls are used in the warmer months to release the heat.
- The tea ceremony is a time for meditation and rest, concentrating on purity, tranquility, and harmony.

## Materials

*Women in a Tea House*, late 1780s, CMA 1930.208

*Water Container in the Shape of a Kettle: Oribe Ware*, early 17<sup>th</sup> century, CMA 1958.336

*Square Dish with Design of Plovers over Waves*, c. 1700, CMA 1966.365

*Tea Storage Jar: Shigaraki Ware*, CMA 1978.6

*Storage Vessel: Tokoname Ware*, second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, CMA 1992.137

*Storage Jar: Echizen Ware*, 1400s, CMA 1989.70

*Water Container (Mizusashi)*, 1991, CMA 1995.6.a

*Heron on a Willow Branch*, late 1700s, CMA 1997.108

*Chashaku*: slender bamboo tea scoop

*Chasen*: tea whisk (notice the naturalness of the wood)

Clay: a ball of clay for each student

Newspaper to cover, a variety of tools for decorating the bowls, non-toxic glazes

Castile, Rand. *The Way of Tea*. New York: Weatherhill, 1971.

Okakura, Katuzo. *Tea Ceremony*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 2000.

Shohitsu, Sen no, *Tea Life , Tea Mind*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1979.

## Procedure

1. Distribute copies of CMA images to students or link onto CMA website ([clevelandart.org](http://clevelandart.org))
2. Discuss the following questions: (Use the ceramic and wood images only)
3. Have students look carefully at each image. Ask students to answer the following questions:
  - a. Can you tell what each piece (tea utensils and equipment) is made from?
  - b. How do you think the piece was used?
  - c. What makes you say that?
  - d. What shapes do you see? What do they look like?
  - e. What textures do you see? What colors? Why do you suppose that is? Do you see any patterns in the pieces of ceramic?
  - f. What do you notice about the wood pieces? Why are they made the way they are?
  - g. What do you think they are used for?
4. In conjunction with the art teacher, if possible, have students make their own tea bowl.
5. Form clay into a ball. Shape it by rolling it between the palms or using hands on a paper-covered surface. With the clay ball in palm of hand, use the opposite thumb to press into clay but not all the way through it.
6. Begin to open up the bowl shape by revolving bowl on the palm and pinching the opposite thumb and fingers on all sides of the bowl.
7. Make sure the walls of the bowl are the same thickness so that the clay will dry evenly.
8. Decorate with calm patterns that convey tranquility, simple patterns of nature.
9. After firing and glazing, the students should be ready for an actual tea ceremony.
10. Review the purpose and procedure of the tea ceremony using the Key Ideas.
11. Are there any events in our culture that require such a rigorous format in the preparation and the carrying out of the event or ceremony? Are these events simple or complex in nature? What is the ultimate goal of the event preparation?
12. Study the artifacts and images of a tea ceremony.
13. Does the design on the artifact indicate any specific event or person?
14. Why do you think this ceremony is such an important event in Japanese culture?

## Enrichment

- A. Have students read selections from the above-mentioned books in preparation for the tea ceremony.

- B. Select 2 or 3 students to research the art of flower arranging (*ikebana*) and to prepare a brief oral report. Have them prepare an arrangement for the tea ceremony. Alternatively, find a Japanese visitor to do this and later have a group of students prepare their own arrangement.
- C. Locate a Japanese visitor or a local resource person who is familiar with the tea ceremony to demonstrate the tea ceremony so that students will have the sensory experience.
- D. Students will conduct their own tea ceremony. Teacher will need to provide all the materials necessary for the event (pottery tea bowls, cups, ladle, whisk, powdered green tea, hot plate, kettle, sweets or fruit). Gather students on the floor. Choose an artwork or object from nature to reflect upon. The time should be relaxing and reflective. The host should prepare the tea after the sweets have been offered. Follow the tea preparation procedure as described in the Key Ideas section. Encourage students to use appropriate terminology for the tea ceremony serving pieces.
- E. Have students go to [web-japan.org/kidsweb/meet/chado/chado01.html](http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/meet/chado/chado01.html) to read about a family that performs the tea ceremony or read about the tea ceremony in a book such as Tea Ceremony (Asian Arts and Crafts for Creative Kids) [http://www.amazon.com/Ceremony-Asian-Arts-Crafts-Creative/dp/0804835004/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1312241195&sr=1-1#](http://www.amazon.com/Ceremony-Asian-Arts-Crafts-Creative/dp/0804835004/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1312241195&sr=1-1#).

## **Evaluation**

- A. Write a two-page reaction paper: How does American society dedicate time for spirituality and finding time for reflection on one's surroundings?
- B. Display *Heron on a Willow Branch* CMA 1997.108 and evaluate how this scroll (*kakemono*) would fit into a tea ceremony. The host's selection of this scroll tells us much about what time of year it is, what type of food will be served, and the type of utensils that will be chosen for use.
- C. Write a two-page paper explaining the harmony that the host will try to achieve at the tea ceremony by the special attention that will be given to the preparation of food, utensils, kimono, flowers, food decorations, and mood.

## **Ohio State Standards**

### *People in Societies Standard*

Compare the perspective, practices, and cultural products of past and contemporary civilizations in order to understand commonality and diversity of cultures.

Experiencing the impact and diversity among practices and perspectives of different cultures.

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